

## **Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 147**

### **RESOLUTION CHAPTER 5**

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 147—Relative to Abraham Lincoln's birthday.

[Filed with Secretary of State February 25, 2002.]

#### **LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

ACR 147, Mountjoy. Abraham Lincoln's birthday.

This measure would declare that Abraham Lincoln be honored on his birthday as the virtual symbol of the American dream whereby an ordinary person from humble beginnings can reach the pinnacle of American society as President of the country and serve with honor and courage.

WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln, of all the presidents in the history of the United States, is the one that Americans remember the most and with deepest affection. He rose from humble beginnings to become President of the United States and bravely led his country during its darkest conflict, the Civil War; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lincoln brought a new honesty and integrity to the White House, and would always be remembered as "Honest Abe." Most of all, he is associated with saving the Union with the final abolition of slavery; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809, in Kentucky, and spent the first seven years of his life there; and

WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln began a long road to become the 16th President of the United States; and

WHEREAS, In his entire life, Abe was only able to go to school for a total of one year. This lack of formal education only made him hungry for more knowledge, and he mastered the Bible, the works of William Shakespeare, and the law; and

WHEREAS, As Abe grew older, he noticed that people loved to listen to stories and he began telling tall tales in the general store where he worked. Customers came and stayed when they knew Abe would be there, just to hear him talk. His family moved once again, this time to Illinois where he began working in a store in the new capital of Springfield; and

WHEREAS, Abe's powerful oratory soon helped him to enter a new arena, that of politics and the law. In 1834 he was elected to the Illinois House of Representatives and began studying to become a lawyer; and



WHEREAS, In 1847 he was elected to Congress, where his opinions against the Mexican War and his vehement opposition to the extension of slavery did not ensure him a long stay there. He was not elected to a second term, so he returned to the practice of law; and

WHEREAS, A few years later, with the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act and the Dred Scott decision by the United States Supreme Court, there were few barriers left to the extension of slavery throughout the country; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Lincoln fundamentally believed in the preamble of the Declaration of Independence which states that, “all men are created equal”; and

WHEREAS, Abe joined the Republicans, a new political party that was opposed to the extension of slavery. The Republicans nominated him for the United States Senate in 1858, and in his acceptance speech, he stated: “A house divided against itself cannot stand ... . This government cannot endure, permanently half-slave and half-free ... . I do not expect the Union to be dissolved. I do not expect the house to fall but I do expect it will cease to be divided.” He lost a close election to Stephen A. Douglas, the Democratic Party candidate; and

WHEREAS, Having been nominated by the Republican Party in 1860 as its candidate for the Presidency of the United States, Mr. Lincoln won by a small margin; and

WHEREAS, Shortly after he assumed office, Fort Sumter was attacked and the Civil War began. Despite his military inexperience, President Lincoln displayed a shrewd grasp of military strategy, recognizing from the beginning the importance of the western theater and the necessity of taking advantage of the Union’s superior resources. It took him several years, however, to find competent and aggressive generals to implement this strategy; and

WHEREAS, As the war continued, the objectives of the war expanded to not only saving the Union but also to freeing the slaves, and he moved to free the slaves by issuing the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863; and

WHEREAS, Uncorrupted by the power of the office of the Presidency, Mr. Lincoln enunciated the nation’s loftiest ideals during its darkest moment. His Gettysburg Address, regarded as one of the finest speeches in the English language, was delivered by him at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, on November 19, 1863. On that day, ceremonies were held to dedicate a cemetery for those killed in the Battle of Gettysburg which took place July 1 to 3, 1863, between George Gordon Meade’s Army of the Potomac and Robert E. Lee’s Army of Northern Virginia; and



WHEREAS, Abraham Lincoln was elected to a second term in 1864. The South subsequently surrendered, and the Civil War ended on April 9, 1865, with the surrender of General Lee to the Union General, Ulysses S. Grant. The difficult task of national reconstruction and reconciliation lay ahead, but President Lincoln would not be the person to lead the country through this difficult period; and

WHEREAS, On April 14, 1865, Mr. and Mrs. Lincoln attended a play at Ford's Theatre in Washington, D.C. A few minutes past 10 p.m., an actor who disagreed with Mr. Lincoln's political opinions stepped into the Presidential box and shot the President. He died the following morning, and his Secretary of War said that Lincoln now "belonged to the ages"; now, therefore, be it

*Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby declares that Abraham Lincoln be honored on his birthday as the virtual symbol of the American dream whereby an ordinary person from humble beginnings can reach the pinnacle of American society as President of the country and serve with honor and courage; and be it further

*Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.

